

Live on air, a news anchor accused his family members of child abuse



By [Frances Vinall](#)

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The news anchor behind the desk looked straight into the camera and said, “This is the start of a different program.”

“I have told you many stories,” Juan Pedro Aleart, co-host of news program “From 12 to 14” in Rosario, Argentina, said in Spanish. “This is the first time that I will tell you mine.”

Live on air for almost half an hour last week, Aleart told viewers of a nightmare within his family: allegations of a violent father who terrorized him and of a member of his extended family who sexually abused him from the age of 6. Nobody did anything to stop it, he said.

“I know what it feels like: It’s degrading, it’s embarrassing,” he said, addressing male survivors of sexual abuse. “I know that many have not told their wives, their children, their friends, their psychologists.”

“I want to say that the only path to healing is to put it into words, to talk about it, to denounce it,” he added.

In text messages to The Washington Post, Aleart, 36, said he was “terrified” before making the broadcast, but had felt “light and free” since. He had received thousands of messages of support, he added.

Aleart’s siblings denounced his sharing their personal information in the broadcast and said in a joint statement that they had been “revictimized,” according to local media.

Silvia Roxana Picada, co-founder of Argentine support and advocacy group Adults for the Rights of Children, said the organization had received an uptick in calls from people seeking help for the first time after Aleart’s broadcast, which she said had been a major story in Argentina.

“We feel that keeping silent about this type of abuse is to the benefit of the abuser,” she said through an interpreter, emphasizing that tackling child sexual abuse was a global problem.

One in five women and one in 13 men worldwide report having been sexually abused before the age of 18, according to the World Health Organization.

Sebastián Cuattromo, Piceda's husband and co-founder of the group, and a survivor of child sexual abuse, said it could be especially difficult for men to speak about their experiences because of stereotypes about male roles in society, which he referred to as "machismo."

"There is a sense of guilt and a sense of shame which can be very difficult to process," he said through an interpreter.

He recalled news coverage that mocked male victims of an Argentine celebrity accused of abuse at about the same time he was experiencing abuse himself.

But Piceda added that "a change of culture is happening," led by survivors speaking up.

Alart said that his father died by suicide after a criminal complaint was filed against him. Alart sought prosecution of the family member whom he had accused of sexual abuse, but a judge ruled that the statute of limitations had expired, he added.

"There was a positive reaction to presenting my story," he said. "[But] I feel that society in general — in the entire world — tries to brush these things under the rug, because it doesn't look good for the family, for the town, etc."

He credited therapy and a close circle of supporters with helping him face depression. "The anguish has vanished, and it did as soon as I started speaking," he said.